Cloak-and-Dagger Dirty Work in Berlin, P. 4

What Can Be Learned (Despite An Iron Curtain Mentality) in Ulbricht's Realm, Pages 2 and 3

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Back From Europe With Slim Hope

Whether seen from near or from far, the Berlin crisis looks pretty close to hopeless. As long as Germany is divided, West Berlin's position will be precarious, and this will create fear, tension and instability between the great powers. But—and this is perhaps the basic factor in the German situation—both the West German and the East German regimes have nothing to gain by reunification. Ulbricht is fully as intransigeant as Adenauer, and Erhard—who would be better than Etzel as Adenauer's successor—has already explained (see Gaston Coblentz's interview with him in the New York *Herald-Tribune* April 14) that like *der Alte* he is unwilling "to give an inch" on disengagement, or Berlin.

Free elections would bring into being a Socialist Germany, ending Communist rule in the East and removing that Christian Democratic facade behind which the German military and the industrial monopolists have been returning to power in the West. The West German ruling clique needs tension to proceed with its plans for nuclear armament; Ulbricht's hard line and very existence would be threatened should a thaw bring gentler Soviet policies. In this sense, Ulbricht is Khrushchev's Chiang Kai-shek, fearing a world settlement as his own demise. And just as Chiang has his means of manipulating American politics from within, so (one suspects) the wily Ulbricht has his own China Lobby—knows how to play for his own ends on the still unsteady balance within the Kremlin and between it and Peking.

Strange Swap Suggested

A second factor which makes settlement difficult is that the West Berlin Socialists are closer to Adenauer than to their own comrades in West Germany. Bitter experience has made them distrustful of any solution, even within the United Nations, which involves cooperation with the Communists. They want the Western troops to stay. They realize their position is unsafe as long as Germany remains divided. But they hope that within the confines of a world settlement reunification can be achieved. One West Berlin official suggested to me that maybe if America would agree to Red China's admission into the United Nations, the Soviet bloc in return would relinquish its hold on East Germany!

The real obstacle is that no one except the Berliners and the West German Socialists wants reunification. Britain has just been edged out of second place among the world's exporters by West Germany, and fears Bonn's aspiration to take London's place as Washington's prime ally. De Gaulle likes Adenauer because he symbolizes a truncated Reich. The Russians, Poles and Czechs fear not only German rearmament but the strongly nationalistic tendencies the German Social Democrats have shown since the war. The American military prefer West Germany in NATO to the hazards of unification, and the Russian military may feel the same way about their hold on Saxony's uranium mines. The truth is that no one trusts the Germans—not even their own leaders. Even the West German Socialists see question marks. They regard reviving anti-Semitism—as yet minor and sporadic—as an index of political recovery, and they confess their fear that hard times might bring a rightist revival.

The story of Berlin, of Germany, of Poland and of Europe calls for a Sophocles. The European peoples—and we Americans with them—are caught in a snare of old fears, and old grievances, from which there seems to be none but a tragic exit. It is only by lifting our eyes from the immediate issues that we may hope to find a way out. Nowhere but in Europe can one see so clearly the menace which is held for mankind by the nation state, with all its vested emotional interests. Tiny countries one can cross by plane in an hour insist on their right to be a law unto themselves, and to kill their neighbors wholesale. The crematorium was only the efficient German way to fulfill the hatred they all nourish. Just as German hates Pole, so Pole hates Ukrainian and Ukrainian hates Russian. Europe is a festering mass of national hatreds. If it were not Berlin, it would be Breslau or Lwow or Kiev which could start them all fighting again. A world of nation states without law is a world in which war is inevitable.

Despite Their Masters and Their Myths

Only in such a perspective, sustained by a new sense of common humanity, can we work our way back slowly from the abyss. It was Easter time in Germany and Poland, and the colorful street crowds stirred one's love and pity. In this, the spring festival of the resurrected god, one could see the greater miracle, the resurrection of man. Everywhere, with a vitality that commands awe, under whatever system of rule and mastery, men have been digging new homes and lives out of the rubble. Here this is advertised as a triumph of free enterprise and there of economic planning; the truth is that on both sides men are rebuilding *despite* myth and muddle. A new crop of rosy-cheeked babies could be seen on the Kurfurstendamm and the Nowy Swiat; a new crop of lovers held hands in the warm sunshine along the Rhine and the Vistula. But on both sides there also appeared fresh youths in the old uniforms. Twice in our lifetime Europe has been crushed and rebuilt. Could it rise again if crushed a third time? Would there still be enough vitality to well up from the human roots for another resurrection? Any effort at compromise over Berlin seems inconsequential beside so fearful a gamble. Maybe with Mr. Dulles finally retired we will really make that effort.

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An Official Exhibit Reveals How Unrevolutionary the CP Was Under Hitler

After Warsaw, A Visit to East Berlin Is Like A Return to Stalinism . . .

Berlin (East)

To return from Warsaw to East Berlin is like stepping back into the era of Stalinism. In Poland, once one has his visitor's visa, one may go where one likes and talk with whom one pleases. But admission to the DDR, the German Democratic Republic, the East Zone Communist regime, is as difficult as admission to the Soviet Union before Stalin died. Journalists allowed in—with the air of having a favor conferred upon them—must follow a planned route and be accompanied by an official translator and guide.

I was offered a two day tour but this included only two visits, one to a collective farm, the other to Stalinstadt. Most of my time would have been spent travelling in a car, and I would not have had what I wanted—a chance to roam the streets of an East Zone city unaccompanied and to try to talk freely to its people. I decided instead to spend my limited time talking to journalists and officials of the DDR.

Even Poland's "Official" Journalists

But in this, too, East Berlin was strikingly different from Warsaw. Officials are not afraid to talk in Warsaw. Despite a certain slow retrogression since 1956, Warsaw is still the one place in the world where one can talk sense with Communists instead of merely exchanging slogans. Even journalists on the official paper, *Trybunu Ludu*, talk with a freedom and a sophistication, a feeling for reality and nuances, a familiarity with the outside world, that makes a visit to Warsaw memorable.

Though Gomulka is slowly being pushed into participating in the campaign underway in all the Soviet states against writers and intellectuals, Poland remains extraordinarily free. The "revisionist" philosopher, Kolakowski, for example, still teaches philosophy at Warsaw University and is still a member of the United Workers Party. The government is still full of Left Socialists who talk and think like socialists, not Communists, that is, as men who share the traditions of free society, and prize the virtues of persuasion over the shortcuts of coercion.

In East Berlin, I explained at the Foreign Office that having spoken in Warsaw with an editor of *Trybunu Ludu*, I would like to talk with an editor of *Neues Deutschland*. I said that having had a fill-in at the Foreign Office in Warsaw, I would like one in Pankow. I suggested that since I had spoken with economic planners in Poland, it would be interesting to talk with their opposite numbers in the DDR. Every suggestion was carefully taken down, but everybody —without exception—seemed to be too busy. Since American newspapermen rarely appear in the East Zone, one might have imagined that there would be curiosity and eagerness for an exchange of ideas. I had much better luck talking to people in Moscow three years ago than in East Berlin. I had the distinct feeling that—as in Stalin's day—meeting a foreigner (even though an "anti-Fascist") was indiscreet.

Creating A Closed World

In roaming the streets of East Berlin and talking with people, one can see the effort to create a closed world. No Western papers are on sale at the many newsstands. Travel agencies display bright posters on Unter den Linden but travel is channelled to the Soviet sphere and even there the lucky voyager must travel in a group and on a group visa rather than with an individual passport. This means that any traveller who wanders away from his supervised group is in danger of being picked up by the police since he has no identification papers or visa of his own.

The East German regime, like the Western, is governed by old men, Rip Van Winkles who have come back to life after the cataclysm of Hitler and the war, bringing with them experiences and views which have little meaning for a new generation. I felt this strongly in talking with Socialists in the West and I felt it again when I happened into an exhibit at the Museum of German History in East Berlin. This covered "forty years of the November Revolution 1918-1958." Its reproductions of newspapers, photographs, banners, uniforms and weaponry provided a party line history in miniature of Germany from the fall of the Kaiser until 1958.

One of the first things which struck one about the exhibits was that their emotional roots were in the fierce struggles between Communists and Socialists in the early 20's, the period when the present rulers of the DDR were in their prime. The "'treason" of the Social Democrats in utilizing the army to put down revolutionary uprising was vividly portrayed, but there was no real presentation of the forces which later brought Hitler to power. It is as if Nazism was an inexplicable natural phenomena, an overwhelming hurricane, interrupting the familiar party struggle with the Social Democrats.

The Fate Luxembourg Missed

The second impression was of the lack of heroes with which to impress the young. Here were Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg (the latter a Polish Jewess) murdered by the reactionaries in 1919. Here was the Bulgarian Dimitrov defying the Nazis in the Leipzig trial. Here was La Passionaria addressing the German volunteers in the anti-Fascist ranks in Spain. But where were the Germans? The KPD—the German Communist Party—is proclaimed as "the soul of the resistance" to Hitler but nowhere could one find a photograph or a newspaper story showing a single act of revolt, terror or sabotage against Hitler.

Ulbricht modestly reappears (his role was indeed modest) throughout the picture history but just what he did during the Hitler period is a mystery. A picture shows him with Ernst Thaelmann addressing the last public meeting in Berlin January 25, 1933, before the Nazis took full power. Ulbricht next reappears, warmly dressed, on the Stalingrad front in 1943, ten years later. The most truthful part of this exhibit, and the most eloquent, is the blank which covers the years when the "soul of the resistance" was supposed to be resisting Hitler. The most revolutionary section of the working class submitted without throwing a single bomb while its leaders—like Ulbricht—sat out the terrible years in Moscow.

The third impression left upon one by the exhibit was the oversimplified view it represented of German history. The Nazi-Soviet pact, of course, was omitted; there were no pictures of Molotov and Ribbentrop in fraternal accord. No youngster, seeing the story as told here of Rosa Luxembourg's martyrdom, would guess that she was already critical of Lenin for abolishing freedom of the press and free elections; if the rightists had not killed her in 1919, Ulbricht's comrades would have expelled or liquidated her later as a deviator, or "revisionist." The follies of the "united front from below" and the crucial error of the Communists in picturing the Socialists as "Social Fascists" and the main enemy never appear.

No Way to Create Democracy

These evasions and oversimplifications are capped by placards which proclaim the DDR as "the first real democratic state in German history" and descend into Stalinist gibberish by explaining that this is so because the DDR rests on "the principle of democratic centralism." This is history and politics as it is being taught to German youth in the DDR today. Instead of a clean wind after Nazism, we have here only more half-truths, more propagandistic confusion, more regimentation and more dictatorship. This is no way to create a new democratic generation.

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A Parliamentary Guide Explains The World's "Most Democratic" Republic

. . . The East German Regime Has The Old Iron Curtain Mentality

The mentality created by such education was on display in the minor official who took me on a tour of the *Volkskammer*, the DDR's parliament, which is housed in a former building of Berlin University on Luisenstrasse. The main chamber, with its circular desks, looks like what it is—a lecture hall. Behind the rostrum was the symbol of the DDR, combining the hammer (the working class), the artist's compass (the intellectuals) and a blade of corn (the peasantry).

Dissenting Votes Unknown

The official explained that in many capitalist countries, parties often put forward a common list. "Here," he said, with a gleeful smile, as if announcing a new stage of progress, "we have one list which represents all parties." The list represents five parties (the Nationalists, the Liberal Democrats, the Christian Democrats, the Peasants and the governing SED, the Socialist Unity party) and five mass organizations (the Trade Unions, the Free German Youth, the Democratic Women of Germany, the Peasants and the Kulturbund). All these parties and groups are represented in the *Volkskammer* and its committees.

With so many parties, one would expect some differences of opinion. My guide explained that proposed laws were almost always modified in committee. "Do you," I asked, "ever have a vote cast against a bill in committee?" He explained, almost with a note of horror, that there was never a "gegen stimme" (a vote against). Were there ever speeches against a bill in the Volkskammer? This, too, was unheard of. I was told I must remember that all these parties had "a common idea."

Some People Are Unregenerate

My guide said that actually this was the most democratic government in the world. As proof, he cited the fact that at the last elections 99 percent of the voters had voted for the common list.

"What happened," I asked mischievously, "to the other one percent?"

"Ach," my guide sighed, "they voted *nein*."

So unregenerate is human nature even under the most ideal conditions. My guide did go on to point out, however, that in the previous elections the common list had only obtained 98 percent. Progress had been made.

When I tried to draw the guide out later into a discussion of free elections, he said the German people had had a bad experience with free elections. "Hitler," he said, "came to power by free elections." So as a solution we were back at dictatorship again.

Fear of West German Militarism

This submissive party hack mentality, which the Ulbricht regime favors and fosters, is not typical even in Germany. There are, among the youth, those who think and doubt as elsewhere. Here the regime's strongest support is not its own virtues but the worst aspects of the other side. A student who is pro-regime but holds back from joining the Party because he has his misgivings told me, "We students listened to the broadcasts of the Bundestag debates on nuclear rearmament. When we heard Strauss (the West German defense minister) say that he was ready to use nuclear arms if necessary even against his brothers of the East Zone, we saw that our government was right." Fear of West German militarism provides support for the Ulbricht regime.

But there was a time, three years ago, when the winds of a new freedom blew in East Germany as well as in Poland and Hungary. There were even national forums, town meetings, in which differences were debated. The Germans, who always seek a theory to explain events, wanted a theory with which to explain Stalinism. The "cult of personality" concept put forward by Krushchev in his famous secret speech at the 20th Congress did not satisfy them. Inevitably their questioning also questioned the methods of the Ulbricht regime.

Ulbricht Had A Rival

A faction in the party led by Karl Schirdewan, once secretary of the Central Committee, now relegated to an obscure post, wanted a loosening up Polish style, a slowing up of collectivization in the countryside and greater freedom of expression for the intellectuals. At one time he took refuge in Moscow and it looked as if Khrushchev might back him against Ulbricht, who advocated the continuance of the "hard" Stalinist line.

"It was the Hungarian revolt," one astute East German told me, "which saved Ulbricht. It frightened the Russians back into a hard line. Since then, Ulbricht has consolidated his position in our Politbureau. He has also delivered the goods. Wages are up and prices down. Our lower paid workers are now about as well off as lower paid workers in West Germany, though skilled workers are not as well paid as their opposite numbers across the border. There is no unemployment, indeed there is a labor shortage. The students and the intellectuals want more freedom, but the people generally are quiet so long as conditions improve. The worst repressions are over. There is a kind of uninspired bureaucratic revolution underway that harnesses little enthusiasm but makes progress on the economic plane. The young people withdraw into themselves and conform."

Dangerous Delusions

A member of the ruling strata I encountered privately dismissed the discontent of the intellectuals with contempt. "We'll get along," he said, "without the intellectuals." He had recently been to Hungary and found the situation there quite satisfactory. In the ruling class, there is a complacency about the use of force, a smugness about past "errors" however costly in human terms, that does not bode well for the future. The bureaucrats prefer time-servers to honest men, obedience to zeal, submissiveness to initiative. In East Berlin one smells strongly that atmosphere of mediocrity and vulgarization, that *nouveau riche* self-satisfaction, which marks the ruling strata of the Soviet world everywhere but in Poland. These people enjoy the comforts of self-delusion and are capable of mistakes which can again, as in Hungary, endanger world peace.

Sample of the Completely False Picture of Berlin Given by the Soviet Press

"East Berlin attracts the inhabitants of the West sector by its surplus of goods and their low price. . . . The population of West Berlin visits the democratic sector of the city because of its countless theatres. There are none in the Western portion of the city. . . .

"In search of the real truth, thousands of West Berliners travel daily to East Berlin in order to obtain newspapers and periodicals. They stand in long lines in front of the newspaper stands near the sector frontier awaiting the latest papers. . . .

"The West Berliners are attracted not only by the surplus of goods and the low prices in East Berlin but also by its cheerful and joyful atmosphere. . . ."

—G. Deborin, Prof. of Economics, in Trud, Jan. 9.

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Memo to Senator Mansfield: Another Reason for Subjecting Cloak-and-Dagger to Congressional Scrutiny

What U. S. Agency Financed These Murderous Screwballs in West Berlin?

I want to call a sensational story to the attention of those in Washington, like Senator Mansfield, who have long sought to establish some form of Congressional supervision over the Central Intelligence Agency.

It indicates that there is a kind of underground of twisted minds within our government, and it is also a glimpse of their peculiar activities in Berlin. Mayor Willy Brandt—at a luncheon given him here in Washington by the Socialist party during his recent visit—touched on the need to curb such provocative agencies if West Berlin were to be safeguarded.

The first I heard of the story was when I picked up a copy of the March 29 issue of the respected London *Sunday Times* in West Berlin. I checked it with an official in Mayor Brandt's office. When I got back I inquired among other newspapermen whether the story was known, but it seemed news to all of them. So I give the gist of it here.

Like A Hollywood Scenario

The London *Sunday Times* reported that a luxury villa in West Berlin had just been stripped of its belongings as the result of a decision to close down a group known as "Battlegroup Against Inhumanity." It said "the fantastic goings-on in the red villa . . . included the manufacture of incendiary and high explosive materials, the use of Oriental poisons against its political enemies, the use of children for sabotage operations in East Germany and the employment of an army of spies and informers.

The *Sunday Times* correspondent went on to report that their task "included the setting-up of secret 'black-lists' of officials" in West as well as in East Berlin.

"The shutdown is taken as a sign," the *Sunday Times* went on to report, "that the West is showing its readiness to meet Mr. Khrushchev's complaint about the existence in West Berlin of 'sabotage' organizations before the start of four-Power talks on the city's future. Western intelligence officials in Berlin have found the Russians willing to accept the existence of straight spying and counter-spying, provided that it is done by professionals."

Public resentment in West Berlin against "Battlegroup" activities rose, according to the *Sunday Times*, "following severe sentences meted out to its ill-trained teenage saboteurs by the People's Police." The *Sunday Times* said "American backing for the organization was withdrawn when it was clear that its activities were not only imprudent and exceeding the original purpose of aiding refugees but also well known to the Communists." Later, according to the *Sunday Times*, "financial support from the Bonn Ministry of All German Affairs was also withdrawn."

The only part of this story which was denied was that the Bonn Ministry of All German Affairs has subsidized this group. But the official with whom I spoke confirmed the rest of the story, saying that efforts had been made long ago to stop its activities. He said the group began as a conventional anti-Communist organization but rapidly degenerated under the pressure of providing "results" for its paymasters. "Even the U.S. Embassy didn't know where it go its funds," the official said, "but efforts to stop it were blocked because it had protection from unknown sources in Washington."

A McCarthy Style Campaign

I asked specifically about the reference to "black-lists" of West Berlin officials and was told that the "Battlegroup" ran a kind of McCarthyite undercover campaign, naming certain West Berlin city employes as Communists. He gave me specific examples off the record which he said had been thoroughly disproven. The whole affair seems to have been a perpetual headache and an internal scandal for the West Berlin government.

The West Berlin affair recalls a sensational investigation by the Bundestag. In the autumn of 1952 it was learned that a secret German youth organization had been organized under U.S. auspices. The German police found that this group had been furnished a list of "unreliables" who were to be liquidated in the event of a Russian invasion and that the list included 80 prominent Social Democrats, including the Mayors of Hamburg and Bremen and the leader of the German Socialists, Herr Ollenhauer.

A full account of this affair may be found in the British newspaperman Alistair Horne's book on postwar Germany, *Return to Power* (published here by Praeger). "The American body responsible," Mr. Horne wrote, "was apparently the cloak-and-dagger Central Intelligence Agency, of the activities of which the High Commissioner appeared to be genuinely ignorant . . . Dr. Adenauer solemnly relayed to the outraged Bundestag a pledge of the U.S. Government not to form any more partisan groups."

Apparently, despite that pledge, some secret U.S. Government organization financed and protected a similar gang of murderous screwballs in Berlin.

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